



# Commentary: Chocoholics rejoice!

Story by  
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Chocolate is one of those "forbidden foods," right? It rots your teeth, ruins your dinner, makes your skin break out and of course, causes you to gain that "spare tire" around the middle.

These myths have ruined the name of chocolate, having us believe it is something we should only eat on special occasions or if we're "good." But what if I told you that it would be "good" for you to eat chocolate more often? Interested? Keep reading.

Hello, my name is Kate and I'm a chocoholic. I may be a health conscious runner and nutrition student, but I would gladly eat chocolate for breakfast.

Okay, so maybe Chocoholics Anonymous isn't a real thing, but maybe some of us wish it was. Our cravings have us dreaming of this sweet fix.

I have always loved chocolate, so when recent nutrition research suggested it has some health benefits, I was thrilled.

We all know that aging is a part of life. With aging comes many changes to our bodies and minds. These changes place us at increased risk for a variety of chronic diseases such as heart disease and cancer. Although our family history may contribute to these diseases, lifestyle also plays a big part. The foods you eat, the exercise you do (or don't do), and other behaviors such as smoking and drinking greatly affect your health.

In recent years, scientists found that several foods contain substances called "antioxidants" that help the body fight diseases. Antioxidants are found in fruits, vegetables, tea, wine, nuts and many other foods. They work by stopping the activity of chemical compounds called "free radicals."

Free radicals damage cells and are thought to cause cancer and heart disease. Unfortunately, they are always

in the body because of normal body processes and environmental factors.

Consuming foods high in antioxidants can help prevent some of this damage, avoid chronic diseases and slow aging.

So where does chocolate fit in this picture? Chocolate contains cocoa powder which is packed with flavonols, a type of antioxidant. The higher the cocoa content of the chocolate, the more flavonols it contains and therefore the healthier it is.

However, as with many foods, all chocolate is not created equal. Only dark chocolate has enough antioxidants to be considered beneficial because it contains a higher amount of cocoa.

Milk, white and other types of chocolate, while very tasty, are not your best bet for disease prevention.

What exactly is dark chocolate is supposed to do for you? A study done at the University of Cologne, Germany, showed a connection between dark chocolate intake and blood pressure. The researchers found that a group of people who added 100 grams of a dark chocolate bar (containing 500 mg of the polyphenol antioxidants) to their diets showed a decrease in blood pressure while the group that added a 90 gram white chocolate bar without the polyphenols saw no change.

High blood pressure places you at risk for many diseases like heart disease and stroke.

A second study at the University of California showed that dark chocolate may have a role in heart disease prevention. Flavonols in particular were related to more efficient functioning of the cardiovascular system. They are believed to have the same anti-blood clotting effect as aspirin, which decreases the risk of heart attack and stroke.

Is chocolate better than other sources of antioxidants? Yes and no. According to research done by Chang Yong



Lee, cocoa has twice the amount of antioxidants as found in red wine and two to three times of that found in green tea.

Dark chocolate has more antioxidants per serving, however, foods like colorful fruits and vegetables will provide fiber, many other nutrients and less fat, saturated fat and calories than cocoa and foods containing it.

So where is this wonderful food? Everywhere. Companies have caught on quickly and made dark chocolate available in a variety of forms including chips (for baking), candy (bars and bite-sized) and cocoa.

A good choice would be to mix the dark chocolate cocoa powder with skim milk, vanilla flavoring and some type of sweetener and heat it in the microwave. You'll get all the benefits of the antioxidants without the fat, saturated fat and cholesterol of processed dark chocolates and ready

made cocoas.

An important point to remember is to eat everything in moderation. In addition to antioxidants, dark chocolate contains other not-so-healthy things like saturated fat and cholesterol. These can increase your risk for heart disease and obesity. However, eating small amounts of dark chocolate will allow you to get the benefits of the antioxidants without too much of the unhealthy things.

I hope I have somewhat cleared the name of this oh-so-yummy food. Remember, I'm not suggesting chocolate as a meal or to replace any healthy foods in your diet with chocolate, but consider trying a small amount of dark chocolate in place of a different kind of sweet or treat.

*(Editor's note: Reprinted with permission from Stripe editor Bernard Little. 2nd Lt. Katey Schrumm is a dietetic intern at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.)*

## Tick season approaches

KUSAHC/DIO

Ticks are blood sucking insects which can transmit a variety of diseases to humans, especially Lyme's disease. Ticks are active in Maryland from March through November.

Ticks may be picked up by people and pets walking through grassy and wooded areas and will attach themselves to the skin.

### Preventing tick bites

Safety measures that can be taken to lessen the likelihood of getting bit include walking on cleared trails or paths; wearing long sleeves, pants, and a hat when in grassy or wooded areas; tucking pants legs into socks; and wearing insect repellants. Those containing DEET may be applied directly to the skin, while those containing permethrin should only be applied to clothing. Regularly inspect clothing and body for ticks.

### Removing a tick safely

If a tick is found on the body, remove it as soon as possible. The longer a tick is attached the greater the chance of disease transmission.

Grasp the tick firmly with tweezers as close to the skin as possible to ensure that the head and mouth parts are removed. Pull back slowly but firmly in the reverse direction that the mouth parts are inserted. Be patient when pulling.

Do not attempt to remove the tick through burning, petroleum jelly, finger nail polish, repellants or pesticides. These materials are ineffective and may cause the tick to spray infected fluid into the bite.

Following removal of the tick, wash the wound with soap and water and apply an antiseptic.

If possible, save the tick in a jar, vial, or small plastic bag for identification.

Examine the wound closely for the next several days and note any changes in appearance. If symptoms such as a red rash appear, consult a physician.

For more information, contact the Environmental Health Section of Kirk U.S. Army Health Clinic, 410-278-1964/1773/1769/1956, or Abduhl Sheikh, entomologist with the Directorate of Installation Operations, 410—27-3303.



Courtesy of  
[HTTP://HEM.PASSAGEN.SE/BIRCHS/IMAGES/TICK.HTML](http://hem.passagen.se/birchs/images/tick.html)

# Support

*From front page*

America still cares."

"The most important thing we can do is let families know that the nation cares," Don Woodrick, the group's Kentucky captain, told reporters following a recent memorial service at Fort Campbell, Ky. "When a total stranger gets on a motorcycle in the middle of winter and drives 300 miles to hold a flag, that makes a powerful statement," Woodrick said.

"Some members of our organization are pro-war and some are completely, completely against the war," Mayer added. "What we have in common is an unwavering respect for the fallen and the sacrifice they have made."

"The group is made up mostly of motorcyclists who have served in the military, but it's not a requirement," he said. "It doesn't matter where you're from or what your income is. You don't even have to ride. The only prerequisite is respect."

Mayer said the group has received "very, very, very positive" responses from the families of individuals whose funerals it has attended.

"Without exception, there's a very heartfelt response," he said.

The organization's Web site has a feature titled "We Get Letters," which contains, among other testimonials, expressions of gratitude from the families of fallen service members.

The family of Marine Lance Cpl. Adam VanAlstine, who was killed in February by an improvised explosive device in Ramadi, Iraq, expressed deep appreciation for the group's participation in his memorial service earlier this month in Superior, Wis.

"What an amazing relief and comfort you provided to our grieving family and friends--not to mention providing the coolest and most honorable way to enter a service that any of us had ever seen," the family wrote following the service. "Your service to us was a real blessing. Please know that your show of love and support was felt by all. We were so proud to have you with us that day. Thank you for your honor and respect of our fallen hero."

The family of Army Pfc. Peter Wagler, killed in January by an improvised explosive device in Baghdad, expressed a similar sentiment. "I have never seen such a display of flags as we encountered when leaving the church," one family member wrote. "I have a video in my head of the 'tunnel of flags,' but really wish I had an actual video of it. Many people have told me how meaningful the flags were to them; many shed tears as they drove through the tunnel."

"As for your protecting us from the demonstrators," he wrote, "I looked for them, but could not see them. I never did see them."

Wagler loved motorcycles and planned to buy one after returning from Iraq, the family member wrote.

"He won't get to do that, but he would have loved the tremendous display you put on. Our



Photo courtesy of [WWW.PATRIOTGUARD.ORG/PHOTOS/LISTPICS.ASP](http://WWW.PATRIOTGUARD.ORG/PHOTOS/LISTPICS.ASP)  
*Members of the Patriot Guard Riders out of Kansas form a perimeter line around the funeral of Cpl. Peter Wagler Hutchinson to shield the family members from possible intrusion by anti-war protestors.*

family feels inadequate in expressing our thanks, but please know that we deeply appreciate what you did for us."

George Martin, an Aberdeen Proving Ground employee and retired Army sergeant first class, is also a member of the Patriot Guard Riders. Martin uses his vacation hours to participate in local ceremonies, most recently at a funeral in Westminster on March 10, which drew more than 80 riders.

"We attend whether there are planned demonstrations or not," Martin said, "but only at the

request of or with permission from the family."

Martin urges everyone to visit the Patriot Guard Riders Web site and read some of the comments in the forum posted by family members.

"Many are heart wrenching," Martin said. "I can only urge anyone who rides to check out the Web site and join in. You will be hard pressed to find a more worthwhile cause."

For more information about the Patriot Guard Riders or to join the group, visit Web site <http://www.patriotguard.org/>. Membership is free.

# Taxes

*From front page*

members on active duty outside the United States and Puerto Rico.

Service members serving in a combat zone or in a contingency operation (or are hospitalized as a result of an injury received while serving in such an area or operation), have at least 180 days after leaving the zone or operation to file and pay.

### Filing an extension

Taxpayers who cannot meet the applicable filing deadline

should file an extension. Returns are considered filed on time if the envelope is properly addressed and postmarked on the last day of the filing season.

An extension of time to file is not an extension of time to pay. Taxpayers will owe interest on any past due tax and may be subject to a late payment penalty if payment is not made on time. Taxpayers who want an automatic 6-month extension should file an IRS Form 4868, Application for Automatic Extension of Time to File U.S. Individual Tax Return.

One deadline that taxpayers cannot extend is the date to

claim a refund for Tax Year 2002 in cases where they have not filed a 2002 tax return. Taxpayer must mail such late returns by the last day of the 2005 tax filing season. Taxpayers who want an extension of time to file state income tax returns should consult the appropriate state representative to determine extension requirements.

### Amending a tax return

Taxpayers who receive a corrected Form W-2 with Block 1 "wages" or Block 2 "tax withheld" information changed, or who discover other information that would require a change to a previous-

ly filed tax return, must file an amended tax return on IRS Form 1040X, Amended U.S. Individual Income Tax Return. IRS Form 1040X and instructions, as well as IRS Form 4868 and instructions, are available on the IRS Web site, [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov), or by calling 1-800-TAX-FORM (1-800-829-3676). Taxpayers should consult their original 2005 tax return before attempting to amend it. Misplaced or lost tax returns can be obtained by calling 1-800-829-1040 or by completing and mailing Form 4506-T, Request for Transcript of Tax Return. Taxpayers can file an amended return within

three years of the original filing date. This includes any filing extensions. To get this three-year grace period, however, taxpayers must have paid all their tax due with the return in question. If they did not pay in full, then they only have two years.

### Changing IRS Form W-4

Wage earning taxpayers who receive substantial refunds, or who pay an income tax penalty for failure to withhold the appropriate amount of income tax should consider amending their IRS Form W-4, Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate.

All employees must com-

plete the W-4, so an employer will know how much income tax to withhold from an employee's wages.

The IRS has developed an application that assists employees trying to complete IRS Form W-4. Using the on-line calculator located on the IRS Web site, [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov), ensures that taxpayers do not have too much or too little income tax withheld from their paychecks.

Taxpayers with complicated tax situations should not use the IRS Calculator. Instead, they should read IRS Publication 919, How do I adjust my Tax Withholding.